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SUBJECT: SHABEK NATIONAL ASSEMBLYMEMBER ASKS FOR MORE "VISIBLE" USG PROJECTS IN NINEWA

CLASSIFIED BY: Cameron Munter, PRT Leader, Provincial Reconstruction Team Ninewa, State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

SUMMARY

1. (C) PRT Leader and REO Poloff met with Shabek national assemblymember Dr. Haneen Al Qado in Mosul on February 8. Al Qado thanked the USG for ongoing assistance but said USG development projects in Ninewa need to be "more visible." Al Qado said he is working with other members of the national assembly to have better local recruitment for Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). He believes a more representative force would better respect different ethnicities in the province. Al Qado blames Kurds for ethnic tensions in the area, and said he hopes provincial elections set for this year would help bring Sunni Arabs to the majority to keep Kurds in check in Ninewa. Al Qado said he is working on building a caucus with other minority members of the new national assembly to help move human rights issues to the forefront of legislative topics. He said he is planning a minority and human rights conference with help from the United Nations set to take place this March. End Summary.

USG NEEDS "VISIBLE" PROJECTS IN PROVINCE

2. (C) PRT Leader welcomed Al Qado as his first guest to the PRT. Al Qado was quick to thank the USG for its ongoing help and assistance to the Iraqi people. PRT Leader asked for Al Qado's assessment of how the USG could do things better. Al Qado said the main problem with projects in Ninewa is that they have not been "visible." As a result, Al Qado said Moslawis are "laughing" because there is "nothing to show for the money." He cited several projects, such as Mosul Airport, which has gone over budget and is "nowhere near being completed." He accused crooked contractors and a complicit provincial government with fleecing money supplied by the American taxpayer. Al Qado said he hopes a committee would be established soon by the USG to "look into corruption."

BUILDING MORE REPRESENTATIVE SECURITY FORCES

3. (C) Al Qado said more work needed to be done to make Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), especially the Iraqi Army (IA) and police (IP), more culturally representative in Ninewa, since the IP is predominately Sunni Arab and the IA mostly Kurd. Al Qado believes ISF actually "from Ninewa" would better represent the community and act more respectfully towards different ethnicities in the province. Al Qado said he has been working with other minority members of the national assembly to pressure the Ministry of Interior to institute a program to build more representative security forces in Ninewa. He said he also wrote a letter to President Bush about this issue and the Shabek in Ninewa.

KURDS TO BLAME FOR ETHNIC TENSIONS

4. (C) Al Qado believes USG presence in Ninewa has kept Kurds from "occupying" the province. He asked PRT Leader to continue to pressure the Kurds and "keep them in check." He said if it was not for USG presence the Kurds would have "Kurdified" the whole area, similar to past attempts by Saddam Hussein to "Arabize" the province. Al Qado said non-Kurdish people of Ninewa, especially Sunni Arabs (whom he believes are the "rightful inhabitants of Mosul"), are "pushing back" against the Kurds. He said as a result Kurds are unable to cross the Tigris River to the west side of the city for fear of being attacked. Al Qado claimed Kurds have recruited from the ranks of Saddam's former henchmen in the Baathist regime to, "target and intimidate minorities." He said he is on the top of a "hit list" by the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), and was informed of this by friends in the Shia and Assyrian communities with ties to the Kurdish party.

PROVINCIAL ELECTION PREDICTIONS

15. (C) Al Qado said he is confident provincial elections would help settle problems with ethnic tensions in Ninewa, especially with the Kurds. He said the election could be held as early as May, after the new central government is seated. Al Qado believes a reason for recent problems in the area was the fault of the Sunni Arabs for not participating in the January 2005 election, which allowed minorities and Kurds to dominate provincial politics. Al Qado said this dominance has kept the provincial government's interests tied to Kurdish political parties to the detriment of the province. As an example, Al Qado cited the Peshmerga who he said arrest and detain people in minority villages without "official authority." Al Qado said he hopes if Sunni Arabs dominate the provincial elections they might also be able to keep Kurds in check.

16. (C) Regarding the election outcome, Al Qado predicts that of the 42 seats in the provincial council only five to six would go to the Kurds, six to eight for minority groups, such as the Shabek, Chaldo/Assyrians, and Yezidis, and the rest to Sunni Arabs. Al Qado said the Shabek are working with the Yezidi to form a coalition, and that the Sunni Arabs are trying to build a broad coalition (like the Kurds and Shias) to strengthen their ability to win seats.

WORKING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

17. (C) PRT Leader reiterated the importance of human rights in the fledgling democracy, and for all people in the province to work together to solve problems in Ninewa, since it is a microcosm of Iraq and could be used as a positive example for other parts of the country. Al Qado said he is working diligently on the issue and is building a caucus with other minority members of the national assembly to move minority issues to the forefront of discussions in the new government. He said once the caucus is established he and its members would work towards writing a bill legislating respect for the rights of minorities. Al Qado said he would attend training on federalism this March in Switzerland and Canada, supported by non-government organization National Democratic Institute (NDI). He is also planning a minority rights conference with the United Nations set to take place in March.

MUNTER